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Readings Booklet

January 1995



English 33

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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January 1995
English 33 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: 2 hours. You may take an additional 1/2 hour to complete the examination.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

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I. Questions 1 to 10 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

from ALIAS MR. POLLARD

CHARACTERS:

MR. POLLARD—a middle-aged owner of a smoke shop, and a hangman

MRS. POLLARD—his wife

BEN CLAIRY—a good-looking, eighteen-year-old boy who might be described by some people as a “hood”

WOLANSKY—a cantankerous landlord

MAC—a friend of the Pollards, and a lawyer

TWO DETECTIVES

This television play was first produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on April 21, 1958. The events in the following excerpt take place when the death penalty was in effect for criminals convicted of first-degree murder in Canada. Hanging was the method of execution, and the hangman’s identity was a closely guarded secret. Sometimes, however, the hangman’s wife would know the reason for her husband’s absences from home.

FADE IN: *Inside the smoke shop that MR. and MRS. POLLARD rent from MR. WOLANSKY.*

MRS. POLLARD: Good evening, Mr. Wolansky.

WOLANSKY: I come for the rent.

- 5 **MRS. POLLARD:** It’s all ready for you, Mr. Wolansky. *(She opens the cash register, takes out a cheque and hands it to him.)* Here you are.

WOLANSKY: I give you receipt. *(He takes the receipt book out of his pocket, puts it on the counter, and begins making out the receipt. Street door and bell. BEN CLAIRY comes in from the street.)*

- 10 **BEN (Cheerfully):** Hi, Mrs. Pollard. Where’s your ever-loving husband? Still away?

MRS. POLLARD: Expect him back any minute, Ben. *(He puts an elbow on counter.)*

- 15 **BEN:** How’s my credit for a pack of cigarettes? *(He jars WOLANSKY’s elbow. WOLANSKY gives him a baleful¹ look.)* Sorry, Wolansky.

MRS. POLLARD: I guess it’s all right, Ben. *(She gives him the cigarettes and makes a note of it.)*

Continued

¹baleful—antagonistic

WOLANSKY (*To BEN*): Credit! . . . Credit! . . . Always credit . . . (WOLANSKY tears out the receipt and gives it to MRS. POLLARD.)

20 BEN: That's right, Wolansky. It's credit makes the world go round.

WOLANSKY: Huh! With you it's always credit. (*He moves away from counter. BEN opens the cigarettes. His back is now to WOLANSKY.*) How about my forty dollars? (*BEN doesn't answer, occupied with cigarette. WOLANSKY pokes him with his walking stick.*) Hey . . . you!

25 BEN: Take it easy, man. Look out who you're pokin' with that stick.

WOLANSKY: You owe me forty dollars. Room rent. When you going to pay?

BEN: Aw, come on, Wolansky. Don't be like that.

WOLANSKY: Two months' rent.

30 BEN (*Easy, kidding, smiling*): You'll get your dough. What are you worrying about?

WOLANSKY: Pay you next week, Mr. Wolansky . . . pay you next week . . . but you no pay . . . (*To MRS. POLLARD.*) He no pay you either . . . he no pay for cigarettes . . . he no pay nobody on time . . . (*He is getting excited and noisy, waving the stick.*)

35 BEN (*Getting angry, but still under control*): Take it easy!

WOLANSKY: Never work . . . never pay . . . never any money . . . deadbeat . . . just a cheap crook . . . (*The stick brushes BEN. BEN's temper explodes. Close shot of BEN's face. He breaks into insane rage.*)

BEN: Don't you touch me, you . . . why, you miserable old . . .

40 WOLANSKY (*Frightened, brandishing the stick*): You nothin' but a thief . . . lie . . . stealer . . . (*BEN, in cold rage, closes in; he grabs WOLANSKY by the coat lapels and shakes him violently.*)

BEN: I got a good mind to take you apart, you miserable old skinflint . . .

45 (*WOLANSKY tries to fight him off with the stick. BEN grabs the stick and hurls it aside, getting WOLANSKY by the throat.*)

WOLANSKY (*Strangling*): Leave go!

BEN: Do you think I live in that rat's nest of yours because I like it? . . . Thieving old miser . . . got more ways of squeezing money out of your tenants. (*He is in a murderous rage and has WOLANSKY by the throat, shaking him.*)

50 MR. POLLARD: Ben! (*Cut to MR. POLLARD, who has appeared unexpectedly. His voice is loud, has authority.*)

BEN (*Shaking WOLANSKY*): You come bawlin' me out in public . . . hittin' me with your stick . . .

55 MR. POLLARD: Ben! (*BEN turns, sees MR. POLLARD. Slowly he releases his grasp.*) That's enough. Let him go! (*Street door and bell. MAC comes in. He is mystified. BEN turns away from WOLANSKY, rubs his hands on his coat as if contaminated.*)

Continued

BEN (*To MR. POLLARD*): I'm sorry.

WOLANSKY (*To MR. POLLARD*): He's your friend . . . you be sorry . . . he's no good . . . (*He straightens his clothing, picks up stick, moves toward door. MAC holds it open for him. WOLANSKY turns, pointing.*) He end up in jail . . . *There* he no pay rent! (*He goes out. MAC closes the door.*)

MR. POLLARD (*To MAC*): Hello, Mac.

BEN (*Nodding*): Mr. Mackenzie. (*Straightens his collar and tie.*) Better stick around. If he goes to the police, I'll be needing a lawyer.

MR. POLLARD: Ben . . . that temper of yours. I've told you before . . . you'd better watch it.

MAC: What's it all about? (*They look inquiringly at BEN.*)

BEN: He hit me up for the room rent . . . and I flipped.

MR. POLLARD: That's a mild word for it, Ben. One of these days, if you don't learn to control it that temper's going to get you into bad trouble.

BEN (*Still fuming*): Burns me up . . . he has more money than any of us will ever make in a lifetime, and what good does it do him?

MAC: Oh, I don't think he's that rich. I've heard some of the stories, of course, but . . .

BEN (*Cutting in*): I tell you, it's true. He's rich . . . he's got a hatful. Boy, when I think what a hundred bucks would mean to me, and that old buster with a trunk full of dough under his bed, doing nobody any good . . .

MR. POLLARD: Under his bed?

BEN: It's a fact.

MRS. POLLARD: Ben, don't listen to those stories.

BEN: I got it straight . . . from the woman who looks after his place . . . she told me herself. (*Impressively.*) And I tell you, that old boy keeps thousands of dollars . . . in cash, mind you . . . cash . . . stowed away in an old trunk under his bed.

MAC: Did she see it?

BEN: With her own eyes.

MRS. POLLARD: The money . . . ?

MR. POLLARD: Or just the trunk?

BEN: Both! (*He moves to the door.*) He doesn't trust banks. She told me. She's scared to go near his room for fear somebody steals the dough she'll get blamed.

MAC: If I were you, Ben, I wouldn't spread that story around.

MR. POLLARD (*Shrugging*): Man wants to keep his money in a trunk, it's stupid . . . but it's his own business. (*BEN opens the door, ready to leave.*)

BEN: Some day somebody is going to make it *their* business. Somebody's going

Continued

to bust into that trunk and grab off every mouldy dollar of the old guy's loot.
You wait and see! (FADE OUT.)

100 INTERVAL: MR. WOLANSKY *has been murdered by an intruder who broke into his room.*

FADE IN: *The smoke shop. Day.*

BEN: Could I see Mr. Pollard if he's in?

MRS. POLLARD: Just go on through, Ben. He's having breakfast.

CUT TO: Parlor.

105 MR. POLLARD: That you, Ben? Come in, boy. (BEN *comes in.*) Sit down . . .
have a cup of coffee.

BEN: No thanks. (*He sits astraddle a chair.*) Mr. Pollard . . . you've always been
mighty good to me . . . better'n I deserved . . .

110 MR. POLLARD: Well, Ben, when a man hasn't got any kids of his own . . . what
do you want to see me about?

BEN: Come to ask you a favour.

MR. POLLARD: Um-huh. Before you ask it, Ben . . . Did you have anything to do
with that business the other night? Tell the truth now.

BEN: No.

115 MR. POLLARD: Because if you did, Ben, there's only one thing for you to do.

BEN: It wasn't me, Mr. Pollard.

120 MR. POLLARD: You realize from where I sit it doesn't look good. Right here in
this store you had a fight with old man Wolansky. (*Ticks the points off on his
fingers.*) You owed him money. You knew . . . or thought you knew . . . he
had a lot of cash hidden under the bed. You said it was only a matter of time
before somebody took it away from him.

BEN: Did you tell anybody about that?

MR. POLLARD: Nobody has. I've been waiting for you to come in.

125 BEN: I guess if any one of you had talked, the cops would have had me in for
questioning. It was pretty stupid of me, Mr. Pollard. Taught me a lesson . . .
I got a job.

MR. POLLARD: Good. What kind of a job, Ben? Whereabouts?

BEN: Up north. Mining camp. That's why I come to ask you a favour.

MR. POLLARD: Need some money?

130 BEN: These people, they don't put out for transportation.

MR. POLLARD: That'll be all right, Ben. (*He gets up, goes over to the
bookshelves.*) You've been in here before. You've seen some of these books.

Continued

BEN: All about murders and trials and stuff.

135 **MR. POLLARD:** Criminology. Sort of hobby of mine. (*He taps a row of books with his finger.*) Ben . . . don't get the idea it's smart to live without working. All the criminals written up here thought they were smarter than other people . . . But they weren't smart at all, Ben. Because they all got caught . . . some jailed . . . some hanged . . . so go straight, Ben. Go to your job, work hard and settle down.

140 **BEN:** Mr. Pollard, you know somethin' . . . ? Don't get sore, but there was a time when I had some funny ideas about you . . .

MR. POLLARD: In what way?

BEN (*Awkwardly*): Well . . . all those trips you make . . . leaving here a couple of days at a time every once in a while . . . and then those books . . . Do you
145 know I once had a crazy notion that you were maybe . . . a master criminal? And I looked up to you. I figured you were knockin' off banks, maybe headin' up a big dope ring . . . big-time, you know . . .

MR. POLLARD (*Quietly*): You've got quite an imagination, Ben. (*Leads the way into the store. To his wife, who is sweeping*) Margaret, Ben has a job.

150 **MRS. POLLARD:** Isn't that nice. Whereabouts, Ben? (*MR. POLLARD goes to cash register, opens it, and is taking out money.*)

BEN: In a mining camp, Mrs. Pollard. Up north. (*Street door and bell. Two men come in, obviously detectives.*)

MR. POLLARD: So he needs a little money . . . I could let you have fifty, Ben.

155 **1ST DETECTIVE** (*Shows his badge to BEN*): Your name Ben Clairly?

BEN: That's right.

1ST DETECTIVE: You're wanted down at headquarters. Let's go. (*Takes BEN's arm.*)

BEN: What is this? What's it all about?

160 **1ST DETECTIVE:** You know. Old man Wolansky. (*He sees MR. POLLARD with bills in his hand.*) Cashing a cheque for him?

MR. POLLARD: No. He just got a job out of town and I was letting him have a little money for train fare.

1ST DETECTIVE: Save your dough. (*To his partner*) Looks like we just picked
165 him up in time. Come on, buster. (*They go out. MRS. POLLARD and MR. POLLARD exchange a long look of dawning horror.*)

MRS. POLLARD: What will you do?

MR. POLLARD (*Long pause*): I don't know . . . But it won't happen . . . it'll never come to that.

170 **MRS. POLLARD:** It could. (FADE OUT.)

Leslie McFarlane
Canadian reporter, writer, and playwright (1902–1977)
Leslie McFarlane wrote many books in the
“Hardy Boys” series under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon.

II. Questions 11 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.

from MR. STONE AND THE KNIGHTS COMPANION

It was Thursday, Miss Millington's afternoon off, and Mr. Stone had to let himself in. Before he could switch on the hall light, the depthless green eyes held him, and in an instant the creature, eyes alone, leapt down the steps. Mr. Stone cowered against the dusty wall and shielded his head with his briefcase. The cat
5 brushed against his legs and was out through the still open door. Mr. Stone stood where he was, the latchkey in one ungloved hand, and waited for the beating of his heart, the radiation of fine pain through his body, to subside.

The cat belonged to the family next door, people who had moved into the street just five years before and were still viewed by Mr. Stone with suspicion. It
10 had come to the house as a kitten, a pet for the children; and as soon as, ceasing to chase paper and ping-pong balls and balls of string, it began to dig up Mr. Stone's garden, its owners having no garden worth digging up, Mr. Stone had transferred his hostility from the family to their cat. When he returned from the office he examined his flowerbeds—strips of earth between irregular areas of crazy paving—
15 for signs of the animal's obscene scuttlings and dredgings and burying. "Miss Millington! Miss Millington!" he would call. "The cat pepper!" And heavy old Miss Millington, aproned down to her ankles, would shuffle out with a large tin of pepper dust (originally small tins had been thought sufficient: the picture of the terrified cat on the label looked so convincing) and would ritually sprinkle all the
20 flowerbeds, the affected one more than the others, as though to obscure rather than prevent the animal's activities. In time the flowerbeds had become discoloured; it was as if cement had been mixed with the earth and dusted on to the leaves and stems of the plants.

Now the cat had penetrated into the house itself.

25 The beating of Mr. Stone's heart moderated and the shooting pain receded, leaving a trail of exposed nerves, a lightness of body below the heavy Simpson's overcoat, and an urge to decisive action. Not closing the front door, turning on no lights, not taking off his overcoat or hat, depositing only his gloves and briefcase on the hall table, he went to the kitchen, where in darkness he opened the larder door
30 and took out the cheese, still in its Sainsbury wrapping, from its accustomed place—Miss Millington shopped on Thursday mornings. He found a knife and carefully, as though preparing cocktail savouries, chopped the cheese into small cubes. These he took outside, to the front gate; and glancing about him in the sodden murk—some windows alight, no observer about—he laid a trail of cheese
35 from gate to door, up the dark carpeted hall, now bitterly cold, and up the steps to

Continued

the bathroom. Here, sitting on the cover of the lavatory bowl, still in his hat and overcoat, he waited, poker in hand. The poker was not for attack but self-defence. Often, walking down that cat-infested street, he had been surprised by a cat sitting sedately on a fence post at the level of his head, and he had always made as if to shield his face. It was a disgraceful action, but one he could never control. He feared the creatures; and there were all those stories of cornered cats, of cats growing wild and attacking men.

The damp air filled the hall and invaded the bathroom. The darkness and the silence emphasized the cold. He got up from the lavatory seat and turned on the geyser.¹ Instant hot water! The water ran cold, then after the whoomph! as the jets caught, lukewarm, then at last warm. The geyser needed cleaning; he must remind Miss Millington. He filled the basin and sat down again on the lavatory bowl. The water-pipes ceased to hum; silence returned.

Some minutes later, five, perhaps ten, he remembered. It was rats that ate cheese. Cats ate other things. He put on lights everywhere, closed the front door, and turned on fires.

The cheese he forgot. It was a pleurably agitated Miss Millington who reported the next morning on the disappearance of her cheese from the larder, and its conversion into cubes laid in a wavering line from gate to bathroom. He offered no explanation.

V.S. Naipaul

Novelist and writer of non-fiction born in Trinidad in 1932, V.S. Naipual has been awarded both a British knighthood and Trinidad's highest literary medal, the Trinity Cross.

¹geyser—a gas-operated hot-water heater

III. Questions 19 to 25 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

TRANSLATIONS

- She sits there on the steps and listens
and the wind rustles the dry leaves
of the single maple standing between
the brick apartment building and the street;
5 but she is hearing wind moving through
pine trees and is once again back
at the lake, lazing an hour away
while children have their midday sleep.
Her foot, pressing against the cement step,
10 is pushing down upon the forest floor
to make the hammock rock where it is slung
between two trees down by the dock.
- She does not see the old car with
the dented fender parked by the curb.
15 Her white-filmed eyes see only sunlight
glinting on water. The whish of hidden
traffic reaches her as sound of speedboats
racing up the channel.
- She lies awake at night and listens to
20 the shuffling sounds that people in the hallway
make passing her door, and hears again
the scrabbling noises that the bats made
when they came to feed their young, hidden
within the outside double walls.
25 A wordless shout, down on the street
becomes the half-articulated cry
that sleeping children make, and when a car
sputters in starting out, she hears the snap of twigs
and knows that deer are passing on their way
30 down to the lake to drink.

Continued

Silence that settles both outside and in
is shattered as an ambulance sends out
its chilling cadence in crescendo¹ and diminuendo.²

35 But she is smiling as she falls asleep
hearing the loons' wild, eerie laughter.

Margaret H. Carson

Contemporary American poet and short-story writer, born in 1914

¹crescendo—gradual increase in volume of sound

²diminuendo—gradually decreasing loudness

IV. Questions 26 to 35 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a speech.

from BUSINESS AS USUAL

The following excerpt is from a transcript of a speech presented to the Royal Canadian Air Force, Woman's Division—R.C.A.F.(W.D.)—and Women's Auxiliary Air Force (W.A.A.F.) Reunion, in Calgary, Alberta, on June 18, 1988.

For the past year I have been reading everything I could get my hands on about the war years and about the role women played, both within the Armed Forces and in civilian life. There is very little written, unfortunately, but what is written has brought back some special memories of that very unique time. I found that I could feel a great nostalgia in my own heart and mind, but I found it difficult to put it all into words. Hopefully, my thoughts will blend with your thoughts and together we can recapture the spirit of those days some 45 years ago. Days long past! Jean Bruce, in her book, *Back the Attack*, calls it “a time of innocence and gung-ho enthusiasm.”

To set the scene generally, I again draw from Jean Bruce's book. In Canada there were 50,000 women in the Armed Services, 4,500 nursing sisters, three-quarters of a million women in Canadian war industries, 760,000 on the farms and 400,000 in the civilian labour force. Wives of servicemen struggled alone as single parents and, with no help from government, they raised families, kept them clothed and fed in spite of food rationing and shortages. As careful consumers they struggled to hold down that silent enemy—inflation. They organized and ran salvage drives for recycling, and this produced more war supplies and more consumer goods. Women drove street cars, worked in lumber yards, served as ferry pilots, worked for the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance. They drove lorries overseas, became union organizers in factories—some even decoded messages and spied for Intrepid.¹ They were entertainers, film makers, broadcasters and journalists. Older women knitted socks and rolled bandages and opened their homes to service people on leave.

All this was accomplished without strikes, without child care programs, without subsidies, and for the most part without recognition. The whole world was affected by this war, and from a Canadian perspective women were totally involved. It was a national experience, and women played a significant role in achieving that national purpose—which was to win this war whatever the cost.

The R.C.A.F. (W.D.) enlisted 17,038 women between the ages of 18 and 45

Continued

¹Intrepid—the code name for Canada's most successful leader of spy operations during the Second World War

30 years. They had to be five feet tall or over, of good character, with High School entrance and able to pass a trade test. With these minimum requirements the Air Force drew women of maximum worth who became part of that total effort by the women of Canada.

35 We can take pride in having been there when we were needed—but also in the fact that we pioneered and were part of the social change for women that has marked so much of this 20th century.

A mere 50 years ago it was quite unusual for Canadian women to even travel alone. Yet the recruiting posters were barely dry on the walls when women of all ages, from all walks of life, left prairie towns and coastal towns, cities and
40 northern regions. They travelled days by train to Sign Up and serve Basic Training, either in Toronto or Ottawa.

This was radical stuff! We were leaving the cocoon of home and taking charge of our own lives. We can admit it now—we were scared! Our hearts were in our mouths and pounding! We were striking new ground, future unknown!
45 Our posting took us thousands of miles from home and families. Now that we have children and grandchildren of our own, we can better understand how our families felt to see us leave.

Patriotic? Did we enlist because we were patriotic? Some will argue that we were motivated more by a sense of adventure that appealed to our spirit of
50 patriotism. I think Lynn (Appleby) Wallace said it the best. She didn't analyze her reason for enlisting. She said that all she knew was that when the Recruiting Officer said, "Appleby, you'll do!" Appleby did!

Here's what Appleby did:

She took an oath, swearing on the Bible that she would serve in a job for
55 which there was no job description. Living and working conditions unknown. She swore that she would accept without question the chain of command, and the discipline and rules set out in King's Regulations² Air (which she hadn't read). She accepted that there was no option to resign if she didn't like it. And for this she would be paid 90¢ a day—later increased to \$1.05 in 1943. "The principle of
60 service was considered much more important than the payment for service," said Mary Zeigler in her book *They Serve that Men May Fly*.

What Appleby didn't know then—and later found out—was that she had also agreed to the "practical" rules:

- that she would never flush the ablution without first checking the tank to
65 see if beer is cooling!
- that she would have no wispy bits on her collar.

Continued

²King's Regulations—official military rules

- that she would never wear her stockings inside out! Panty hose? Dream your heart out!
- that she would be five minutes early for everything for the rest of her life!
- that she would don “glamour boots” without complaint!
- that she would line up for everything!
- that she would never use her pockets to carry anything!
- that she would not rotate her detachable collar more than three times without laundering!
- that she would not lift the lid on the vats of chocolate milk and expose to public view the floating scum of powdered milk!
- that she would know the difference between “Carry on” and “carrying on”!

You won’t find these rules in K.R.³ Air. But you can’t fight a war without them. And these habits last a lifetime. Ask Appleby. She’s here tonight!

Appleby is typical of most of us. She saw that there was a job to do, and the Air Force showed her how to get a job done. She enjoyed the experience, developed valuable living skills, looked for humour in everything, and made lasting friendships that have enriched her life ever since.

But women didn’t have an easy time being accepted in the Armed Forces. They were often the brunt of cruel jokes. J. Douglas Harvey, in his book *Laughter Silvered Wings*, tells of the prejudice and ignorance that took the form of a whispering campaign. “Nice girls never join up.” Harvey says that in some families sons became instant heroes when they donned a uniform; daughters became something to be ashamed of. He goes on to say—and I quote from the book:

They entered a strange and alien world, uneasy in their new roles and often cut off from their home by family shame. Snubbed on the street when in uniform, they struggled and served on. And won the respect to which they were entitled—first by their male companions and then, finally, from the civilian population. The high standards that the girls achieved more than helped to change things forever.

War by its very nature is a time of heartbreak. So we cried together as well as laughed. We didn’t have professional counselling to ease depression—but we had each other, and we talked. And we learned to listen. This was therapy Air Force style!

Continued

³K.R.—King’s Regulations

For those of us safe in Canada, reality came with the newsreels. Those
105 overseas knew it all too well. Our boys lying dead on a foreign land; sailors
floating on the sea; flaming planes falling from the sky; the Blitz in war-torn
London; and the walking dead in the concentration camps in Germany.

“Oh God” we prayed, “when will this war end?”

We danced in the Drill Halls. The jitterbug! The Winnipeg Dip! The oh-so-
110 romantic music of Mart Kenny and Glen Miller. We learned to play bridge.
Letters were cherished. Silence was feared. We worked our shifts, then kidded or
biked. On a 72-hour pass we travelled to see the country. Then we danced some
more, and worked harder. We lay in our bunks at night and dreamed of the good
life because *our* world was in turmoil.

115 V.E.⁴ Day, V.J.⁵ Day, and at last—discharge. I thought this would be a
dramatic moment, but it was just business as usual. Your name appeared on a list,
you packed your kit bag, lined up for the last time for a medical examination, pay
parade, and tickets home. Then you jumped on a train. Civilian life, here we
come!

120 Today there would be a fleet of Career Counsellors advising us on career
options and government programs. But not then!

After 10 years of depression during the 1930s and six years of war behind us,
we just wanted to return to normal and get on with the business of living. And we
did.

125 And so with no other preparation than that, a whole generation of women
stepped forth into a new era. For those who chose careers, they filled their niche
in a host of social and professional areas. But most married and had babies!

Some of that innocence and gung-ho enthusiasm had been chipped away. But
in its place was a determination to give our children the benefit of a stable life in a
130 free country.

The world moved on. Somehow we could better understand the restlessness
of youth and their need to find a cause. Maybe our generation was lucky in that
our cause was obvious and the rules were clear!

Pat Donnelly

Pat Donnelly, who was a member of the R.C.A.F. (W.D.)
during the Second World War, lives in Calgary, Alberta.

⁴V.E.—Victory in Europe

⁵V.J.—Victory over Japan

V. Questions 36 to 43 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

TIME TO SPLIT

There was a time in the mid-'70s when wood-stove bores were a serious environmental hazard at parties, the way bullfight bores had been three decades before, sports-car bores were a bit after that and college-tuition bores are now.

That, as seems to be said more and more these days, was then. I believe that I am now the only wood-stove bore still active on my mile of dirt road. My neighbors have concluded that full-time wood heating is dirty, dangerous (chain saws are worse tempered than alligators), economically foolish, a champion time waster and brutishly hard work. In this they are correct.

It is no longer true, alas, that the wood-stove bore can warm himself twice, once by bragging about the money he is saving and again by preening¹ at the perfection of his environmental posture. Heating oil, for the moment, costs less per gallon than bottled no-lead spring water. Never mind economy, however. There are congested localities such as Aspen, Colorado, and Missoula, Montana, where wood burning is immoral, toxically wasteful and severely curtailed. The sweet-smelling, picturesque blue-gray smoke rising from Grandma's condo on a crisp December morning simply loads the air with too much additional junk.

Thus the wood-stove bore is without defenses, except to say that his obsession is unlikely to melt down New England and that it adds no net CO₂ to the atmospheric greenhouse (a fallen tree gives off the same amount of carbon and oxygen whether it rots or burns, and a new tree that spreads in its place takes CO₂ out of the air as it grows).

Wood burning in the late '80s is no more sensible or righteous than mountain climbing. There was an old gent in my town, died a couple of years back, who split and stacked huge piles of wood well past his 80th birthday. He had plenty of money and an unused oil furnace, but wood splitting felt right to him, made sense. For a time, during the trendy days of wood stoves, he was a hero. After wood stoves lost their vogue and he continued to split firewood, he was thought mildly eccentric. Then he died.

I remind myself of the old man. Myself and I, as it happens, are having a dialogue, somewhat testy, thoroughly familiar. It is 7:35 on a chilly morning in late fall, and I am swinging an 8-lb. splitting maul, breaking up oak and birch trunks. Myself is feeling sorry for himself. Our back is stiff from yesterday's firewood fun. Our right wrist, broken years ago in a skiing accident, signals that it is time to stop. Middle-aged men drag themselves through life like wounded

Continued

¹preening—showing self-satisfaction

35 bears, it occurs to me.

“You bet they do,” says myself, who has grown bear-shaped, strangely top-heavy, after years of splitting and heaving wood. “Time for coffee. Time for sticky buns.” “Yeah, yeah, in a while,” I tell myself. We have five cords of dry firewood, or a bit more, stored under the deck of our house. We need eight to be
40 sure of getting through the mid-May snowstorms without burning the guest-room furniture. Myself and I, working together for the moment, stand an 80-lb., 2-ft. section of a red-oak log on end. A thin, spidery crack traces through the heartwood, then out through 80 or 90 years of growth rings to the ridged, slightly greenish bark. That is my target. I drive my maul downward as hard as I can
45 swing. Sometimes the maul head bounces, as if the wood were hard rubber. Get the wedge then; get two or three in fact. This time the oak cracks: *pock!* My eyes blur briefly from the effort. One more swing, and the section of oak trunk falls into two halves, wet as rain—oak is like that—two new red surfaces no one has ever seen before.

50 Who cares? Nobody.

I do. I split the halves into sticks of firewood, throw the sticks to the top of a pile as big as my pickup truck and lean on my maul handle, winded. The mail deliverer arrives in her Volkswagen as I rest. My dog, as she does every day, brings the mailwoman a gift, a stick of firewood stolen from my pile. The dog is a
55 principle of disorder; she has distributed my winter fuel over several acres of pasture. Such disorder, like wood splitting, is obsolete. More city people move into the country and pass more dog-leash laws. Young couples look for houses and apartments, even in what used to be farm country, and find nothing but ads that say NO PETS. In a few years, tour buses will stop in front of my house. Here
60 is a geezer splitting wood, the guide will say. Here is a dog.

My mind, wandering, turns to the mail. Yesterday a catalog arrived from a New Age clothing house, offering “crystal-powered pants.” (This was even more interesting than the smoldering catalog from Victoria’s Secret, offering sullen young women in lingerie.) The pants, so I am assured, have a small, perfect
65 crystal sewn into the back seam to energize the wearer. I think I’ll take a pair of pants, large, with crystal.

All right, I’m stalling. Our back aches. The dog, myself and I climb into the four-wheel-drive truck and head toward the sticky-bun store. Public radio plays Mozart out of the left-door speaker. The dog barks heroically out of the right
70 window at a German shepherd. Back home, an aluminum-siding salesman is calling my number but getting the answering machine. All, or nearly all, is right with the world.

John Skow
Freelance writer for *Time* magazine

VI. Read the first draft of Robin's letter to her friend Monica. Read the letter carefully, noting the revisions, and answer questions 44 to 50 in your Questions Booklet.

January 5, 1995

416 Nalwen Crescent
Nalwen AB T5J 2J4

Dear Monica,

Paragraph Remember how you and I enjoyed the August long weekend at our cottage last
1 year? Well, we're planning another great weekend at our cottage this August long weekend, and we would love to have you join us. I tried to reach you by phone. No luck. My parents were really impressed last year with how well you fit into our "roughing-it-in-the-woods" lifestyle. You even did a super job of chopping wood!

Paragraph Since you proved to be such a wood-chopping expert, my dad asked me to send
2 you this article by John Skow. Dad can be weird that way, but I actually ^{liked} ~~enjoyed~~ the article, and I thought you would enjoy it too. I really enjoy this writer's sense of humour but he's also making a point. Sure we're hearing ^{a lot} ~~a lot~~ about the harmful things we're doing to the ^{environment,} ~~environment~~, but is there any kind of heating device that doesn't produce some kind of waste?

The writer of this article makes you think about more than the environment.
Paragraph [^] A phrase that's really going around these days is "quality of life," and I don't mean
3 the trendy things that cost us ^{a lot} ~~a lot~~ of money! Can you imagine jeans with crystals in the back seam? Give me a break! Who really believes that a shiny piece of

Continued

quartz can[“] energize the wearer?[”] I guess some people will^{buy} by anything just to be^{different!}
^{different!}

Paragraph Thinking about the quality of life made me remember that, when I was a kid, I
4 used to have a good time at my grandparents' farm. The farm's^{different} now!
They've modernized the old farmhouse (central heating and all that) and its' not
as much fun as it used to be! Anyways, in the old days me and Grandpa used to
chop the logs to burn in^{the fireplace} it on chilly evenings. I miss those good times around the
fireplace, eating marshmallows and fudge, and listening to stories about the good
old days. I wonder what kind of good old days we'll have to tell our grandkids
about? Maybe the writer of the article isn't exaggerating when he says that in the
future, tour guides will say things like "Here is a dog!" I mean, you hardly expect
restrictions on having pets when you move from the city to the freedom of the
country, do you? Some progress! From farmland, to homes in the country, to
NO PETS! Are we saving the^{environment} environment for land^{developers} prospectors to build according
to there specifications and rules?

Well, I'd better pack up my pen and paper and get a move on!
Paragraph I have to take my old gas-burner to pick up my mom at work because her
5 computerized chariot is in for repairs—again! Please write to me or call as soon
as you can about the holiday weekend. Please try^{to} and come! If I'm not at home,
just leave a message on the answering machine. By the way, we still don't have
an answering machine—or a telephone—at our cabin!

Cheers!

Robin

VII. Questions 51 to 58 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

OVERSEAS MAIL

It must have arrived this morning, nestled smugly
all day in her mailbox with bills and flyers,
creased and warped from the weeks of snow
and distance it crossed to reach her.

- 5 She would have missed it as she stood over the garbage can
dealing out the junk mail, but for the stamps, waving
bright hands from the paper's blue sky.

- She takes the blade¹ in her hands,
makes the ritual slit, the ritual tear
10 that disjoints the ends of two sentences.
She unfolds his words, wanting
and not wanting something more
than glib descriptions of monuments,
carefully poignant² accounts of the people
15 whose lives he's pilfered³ for detail.
She reads without finding one word
about the two of them, finds no clue
to his heart's whereabouts. She places the letter
with the others, still wondering what they mean,
20 what he means her to do with them.

- She fingers the winter clothes he left with her,
tries to recall how the two of them must have looked
walking together in snow, turning to each other
faces bleak with the season's pallor.
25 Now she sees her face growing webbed with time and climate,
while in her mind, his face grows tan,
his eyes shine, the colour of aerogrammes,⁴
his skin grows smooth as polished cotton,
forgives the year's winter fabric scratched into him.

Continued

¹blade—letter opener

²poignant—touching, moving, sensitive

³pilfered—stolen from (sifted through)

⁴the colour of aerogrammes—the blue of airmail letter forms (the letter is folded to form the envelope)

- 30 Her window frames empty streets
slick with cold, littered with the frozen skeletons
of leaves that hunch in gutters
like abandoned postcards. The familiar shape
of winter scuttles beneath the window,
35 whispers his name over and over
until it becomes the foreign language
she must unlearn.

Rhona McAdam
Canadian poet,
winner of the *Alberta Culture Poetry Award* in 1987

VIII. Questions 59 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this short story.

THE STOLEN PARTY

As soon as she arrived she went straight to the kitchen to see if the monkey was there. It was: what a relief! She wouldn't have liked to admit that her mother had been right. *Monkeys at a birthday?* her mother had sneered. *Get away with you, believing any nonsense you're told!* She was cross, but not because of the monkey, the girl thought; it's just because of the party.

"I don't like you going," she told her. "It's a rich people's party."

The girl was barely nine, and one of the best in her class.

"I'm going because I've been invited," she said. "And I've been invited because Luciana is my friend. So there."

"Ah yes, your friend," her mother grumbled. She paused. "Listen, Rosaura," she said at last. "That one's not your friend. You know what you are to them? The maid's daughter, that's what."

Rosaura blinked hard: she wasn't going to cry. Then she yelled: "Shut up! You know nothing about being friends!"

Every afternoon she used to go to Luciana's house and they would both finish their homework while Rosaura's mother did the cleaning. They had their tea in the kitchen and they told each other secrets. Rosaura loved everything in the big house, and she also loved the people who lived there.

"I'll die if I don't go," she whispered, almost without moving her lips.

And she wasn't sure whether she had been heard, but on the morning of the party she discovered that her mother had starched her Christmas dress. And in the afternoon, after washing her hair, her mother rinsed it in apple vinegar so that it would be all nice and shiny. Before going out, Rosaura admired herself in the mirror, with her white dress and glossy hair, and thought she looked terribly pretty.

Senora Ines also seemed to notice. As soon as she saw her, she said:

"How lovely you look today, Rosaura."

Rosaura gave her starched skirt a slight toss with her hands and walked into the party with a firm step. She said hello to Luciana and asked about the monkey.

Luciana put on a secretive look and whispered into Rosaura's ear: "He's in the kitchen. But don't tell anyone, because it's a surprise."

Rosaura wanted to make sure. Carefully she entered the kitchen and there she saw it: deep in thought, inside its cage. Rosaura was the only one allowed into the kitchen. Senora Ines had said: "You yes, but not the others, they're much too boisterous, they might break something." Rosaura had never broken anything.

Continued

She even managed the jug of orange juice, carrying it from the kitchen into the dining-room. She held it carefully and didn't spill a single drop. And Senora Ines had said: "Are you sure you can manage a jug as big as that?" Of course she could manage. She wasn't a butterfingers, like the others. Like that blonde girl with the bow in her hair. As soon as she saw Rosaura, the girl with the bow had said:

"And you? Who are you?"

"I'm a friend of Luciana," said Rosaura.

"No," said the girl with the bow, "you are not a friend of Luciana because I'm her cousin and I know all her friends. And I don't know you."

"So what," said Rosaura. "I come here every afternoon with my mother and we do our homework together."

"You and your mother do your homework together?" asked the girl, laughing.

"I and Luciana do our homework together," said Rosaura, very seriously.

The girl with the bow shrugged her shoulders.

"That's not being friends," she said. "Do you go to school together?"

"No."

"So where do you know her from?" said the girl, getting impatient.

Rosaura remembered her mother's words perfectly. She took a deep breath.

"I'm the daughter of the employee," she said.

Her mother had said very clearly: "If someone asks, you say you're the daughter of the employee; that's all." She also told her to add: "And proud of it." But Rosaura thought that never in her life would she dare say something of the sort.

"What employee?" said the girl with the bow. "Employee in a shop?"

"No," said Rosaura angrily. "My mother doesn't sell anything in any shop, so there."

"So how come she's an employee?" said the girl with the bow.

Just then Senora Ines arrived saying shh shh.

Apart from the girl with the bow, all the others were delightful. The one she liked best was Luciana, with her golden birthday crown; and then the boys. Rosaura won the sack race, and nobody managed to catch her when they played tag. When they split into two teams to play charades, all the boys wanted her for their side. Rosaura felt she had never been so happy in all her life.

But the best was still to come. The best came after Luciana blew out the candles. First the cake. Senora Ines had asked her to help pass the cake around, and Rosaura had enjoyed the task immensely, because everyone called out to her, shouting "Me, me!" Rosaura remembered a story in which there was a queen who had the power of life or death over her subjects. She had always loved that, having

Continued

75 the power of life or death. To Luciana and the boys she gave the largest pieces, and to the girl with the bow she gave a slice so thin one could see through it.

After the cake came the magician, tall and bony, with a fine red cape. A true magician: he could untie handkerchiefs by blowing on them and make a chain with links that had no openings. He could guess what cards were pulled out from a
80 pack, and the monkey was his assistant. He called the monkey “partner.” “Let’s see here, partner,” he would say, “Turn over a card.” And, “Don’t run away, partner: time to work now.”

The final trick was wonderful. One of the children had to hold the monkey in his arms and the magician said he would make him disappear.

85 He stared at all the faces, one by one. Rosaura felt her heart tremble.

“You, with the Spanish eyes,” said the magician. And everyone saw that he was pointing at her.

She wasn’t afraid. Neither holding the monkey, nor when the magician made him vanish; not even when, at the end, the magician flung his red cape over
90 Rosaura’s head and uttered a few magic words . . . and the monkey reappeared, chattering happily, in her arms. The children clapped furiously. And before Rosaura returned to her seat, the magician said:

“Thank you very much, my little countess.”

She was so pleased with the compliment that a while later, when her mother
95 came to fetch her, that was the first thing she told her.

“I helped the magician and he said to me, ‘Thank you very much, my little countess.’”

Her mother tapped her on the head and said: “So now we’re a countess!”

And now they both stood in the entrance, because a moment ago Senora Ines,
100 smiling, had said: “Please wait here a second.”

Her mother suddenly seemed worried.

“What is it?” she asked Rosaura.

“What is what?” said Rosaura. “It’s nothing; she just wants to get the presents for those who are leaving, see?”

105 She pointed at the fat boy and at a girl with pigtails who were also waiting there, next to their mothers.

“I was the best-behaved at the party.”

And she said no more because Senora Ines came out into the hall with two bags, one pink and one blue.

110 First she went up to the fat boy, gave him a yo-yo out of the blue bag. Then she went up to the girl and gave her a bracelet out of the pink bag.

Finally Senora Ines came up to Rosaura and her mother and said something

Continued

that made Rosaura proud:

“What a marvellous daughter you have, Herminia.”

115 For an instant, Rosaura thought that she'd give her two presents: the bracelet and the yo-yo. Senora Ines bent down as if about to look for something. Rosaura also leaned forward, stretching out her arm. But she never completed the movement.

120 Senora Ines didn't look in the pink bag. Nor did she look in the blue bag. Instead she rummaged in her purse. In her hand appeared two bills.

“You really and truly earned this,” she said handing them over. “Thank you for all your help, my pet.”

125 Rosaura felt her arms stiffen, stick close to her body, and then she noticed her mother's hand on her shoulder. Instinctively she pressed herself against her mother's body. That was all. Except her eyes. Rosaura's eyes had a cold, clear look that fixed itself on Senora Ines's face.

Senora Ines, motionless, stood there with her hand outstretched. As if she didn't dare draw it back. As if the slightest change might shatter an infinitely delicate balance.

Liliana Heker

(translated by Alberto Manguel)

Liliana Heker is an Argentinian writer and editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *El Ornitorrinco* (The Platypus).

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